

Knowing of your interest in federal land management I wanted to share with you information concerning the eligibility of biomass from our Northern California federal forestlands for renewable energy production. Every year throughout the west, those who choose to make their homes and settle communities among our federal lands remain subject to the overwhelming threat of catastrophic wildfire. These fires burn millions of acres each year, produce millions of tons of greenhouse gases, and cost taxpayers billions in suppression funding. Of the three factors that cause these fires, heat (ignition source), oxygen, and fuel, only one is truly within our control-the fuel. Decades of failed policy with respect to federal forest management and suppression policy have resulted in overly dense forests that serve as a tinderbox for the next spark that happens to come along.

Only a quarter of California's new forest growth is harvested annually. This results in a massive net increase of 1.4 billion cubic feet of biomass each year. This amount of biomass represents a tremendous and sustainable feedstock for cellulosic biofuels and renewable electricity production. Unfortunately, the *Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007* contained a detrimental definition of renewable biomass that excluded woody biomass from federal lands and other sources from qualifying for the greatly-expanded Renewable Fuel Standard. In California alone, this definition removes 18.5 million acres of land from biomass production, located largely in areas most at-risk to catastrophic wildfire, as illustrated below.

Proposed [legislation](#) by Representatives Henry Waxman and Ed Markey intends to repeat this contradictory policy by again excluding biomass from federal lands from being used for electricity production under the proposed Renewable Electricity Standard, which would require that 25% of all electrical generation nationwide be from renewable sources by 2025. Excluding biomass from federal lands will not only make it difficult, if not impossible, to meet the requirements of a RES, it provides a significant disincentive for the reduction of fuels on our federal forestlands.

This policy will only serve to exacerbate greenhouse gas emissions from catastrophic wildfire while putting those who make their homes among our federal forestlands in danger. I will oppose this flawed policy and do all I can to include biomass from federal lands for renewable energy production in order to ensure the safety of our communities and the health of our forests and environment.